

ALL OF NORTH CAROLINA'S  
CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS  
WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE  
THE STATE'S UNIQUE CULTURAL  
AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES  
ACCESSIBLE FOR THE  
EDUCATION AND ENJOYMENT  
OF PEOPLE OF ALL AGES  
IN THE STATE, THE NATION,  
AND THE WORLD.

2010

# NORTH CAROLINA'S CULTURAL RESOURCES A SURVEY AND REPORT



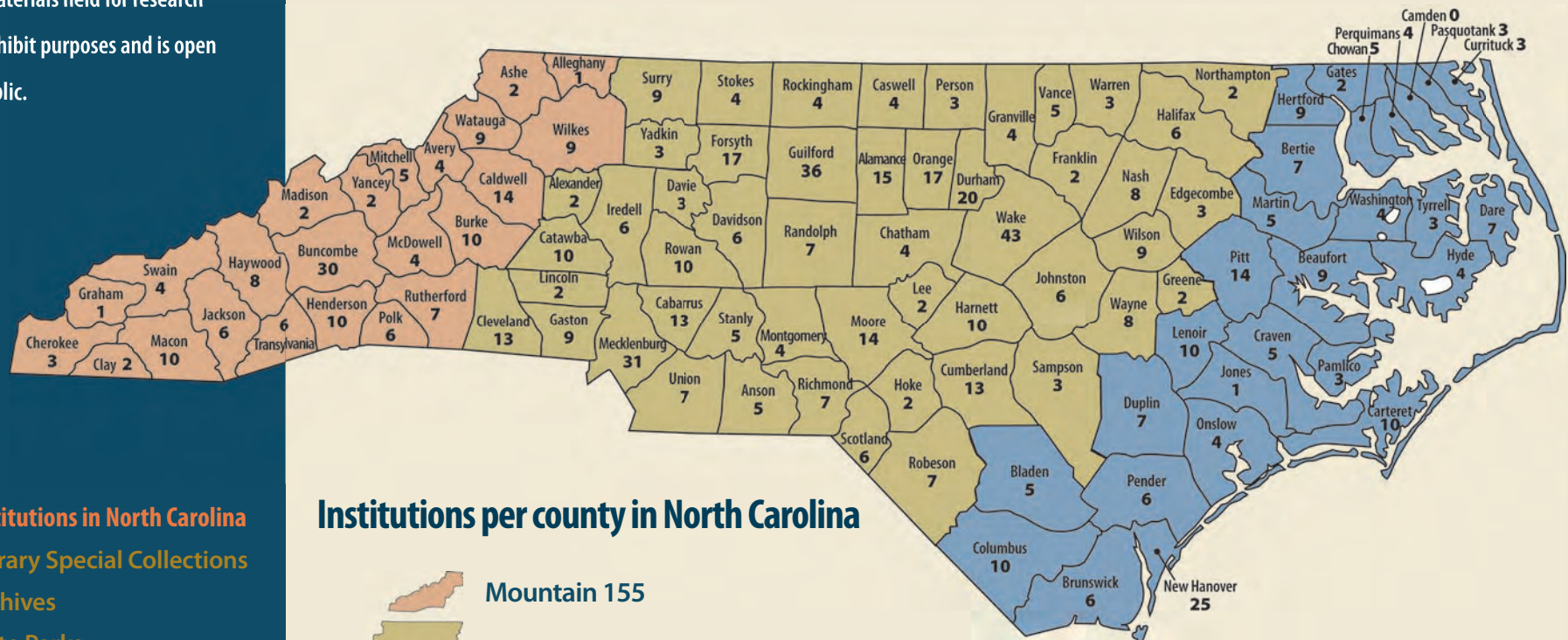
# INSTITUTIONS

The NC ECHO needs assessment survey gathered information from any institution in the state that fit the following description:

Any cultural institution (library, archive, museum, historic site, or organization) that maintains a permanent, non-living collection of unique materials held for research and/or exhibit purposes and is open to the public.

By the time the survey was finished, NC ECHO had identified over 950 cultural heritage institutions and obtained completed surveys from 761 of them, including archives, library special collections, art museums and art councils, historic house museums, history museums, state historic sites, and state parks with cultural heritage collections.

NC ECHO partner institutions may vary in type, size, budget, and location, but they are united in their mission to protect the artifacts and documents that tell the story of our state's heritage while allowing users access to the collections.



## Institutions per county in North Carolina



**Institutions in North Carolina**

- 236** Library Special Collections
- 31** Archives
- 10** State Parks
- 26** State Historic Sites
- 458** Museums





There are 31 archives in North Carolina including the Moravian Archives in Winston-Salem (pictured above). This archive, started in 1753, is the oldest institution surveyed by NC ECHO and in fact is one of the oldest archives in the country. It houses more than a million pages of handwritten manuscripts documenting the history of the Moravian community. (Photo courtesy of the Moravian Archives).



NC ECHO surveyed 26 state historic sites like Fort Dobbs State Historic Site in Statesville, Iredell County (pictured left). Ft. Dobbs is the only North Carolina state historic site associated with the French and Indian War and the only one located along the official colonial frontier.



Private library special collections often hold materials relating to special topics such as the Bernice Bienenstock Furniture Library in High Point, Guilford County (pictured left), which is a world-renowned research center for the study of furniture history and design.

Nearly every county has at least one public library special collection, usually focusing on local history and genealogy. Watauga County Public Library in Boone (pictured below left) has the Austin E. South Genealogy Collection with vertical files, clipping files, published material, microfilm, and other sources useful in the study of local history and genealogy in Watauga County and the surrounding region.

Other library special collections are found in academic institutions like Belmont Abbey College in Belmont, Gaston County. Pictured below right is Donald Beagle, director of the Abbot Vincent Taylor Library, holding a text from the college's rare book collection.



Ten parks in the State Parks System house cultural heritage collections. Fort Macon State Park in Atlantic Beach, Carteret County, interprets and preserves the history of the fort structure and its military role from the pre-Civil War era through World War II (pictured above).



#### Museum types

- 68** Art Museums and Arts Councils
- 104** Historic House Museums
- 235** History Museums
- 43** Science Museums
- 8** Children's Museums



104 museums in North Carolina are historic house museums like the Barker House maintained by the Edenton Historical Commission in Chowan County (pictured left). In fact, several of these museums are historic parks with multiple historic structures like the Denton Farm Park in Davidson County, a 140-acre park that preserves the Richmond Reid Plantation House, the Jackson Hill Store and Post Office, the Jackson Hill Church, and the George E. Sperling Grist Mill (pictured above).

60% of institutions identified in the NC ECHO survey are museums. These institutions care for and make available to the public more than 13 million artifacts.





The majority of museums in the state (**51.3%**) are history museums. An abundance of museums exists. Many preserve and interpret local history. They range from larger professional museums like the Greensboro Historical Museum in Guilford County (pictured below) to smaller volunteer-run institutions like the Faison Historical Museum in Duplin County (pictured left).



There are 68 art museums and arts councils in the state like the North Carolina Pottery Center in Seagrove, Randolph County (pictured top left), which promotes public awareness and appreciation of the history, heritage, and ongoing tradition of pottery-making in North Carolina through educational programs, public services, collection, and preservation.



The North Carolina Estuarium located along the Pamlico River in Washington, Beaufort County (pictured center left), promotes stewardship in the Albemarle-Pamlico region through environmental education and nature-based cultural tourism. This science museum explores the significance of the estuary through interactive exhibits including native living creatures, environmental artworks, creative audio-visual components, historic artifacts, K-12 educational programs, games, and activities, and river excursions aboard the Estuarium's pontoon boat.



Few children's museums maintain permanent collections of historic artifacts. The Greensboro Children's Museum in Guilford County (pictured bottom left) has special collections including a model train collection, Native American artifacts, a stamp collection, and an assortment of vehicles, including fire engines and a NASCAR stock car.



Numerous institutions in North Carolina are dedicated to preserving specific aspects of the state's cultural heritage, and many museums house amazing collections that are simply unique and interesting or that serve to document or elucidate a collector's particular interest or avocation.



The Chicamacomico Lifesaving Station Historic Site and Museum in Rodanthe, Dare County, preserves the history of the first United States Life-Saving Service station in North Carolina.



The Cooleemee Textile Heritage Center in Davie County (pictured above) interprets the history of North Carolina's cotton mill culture.







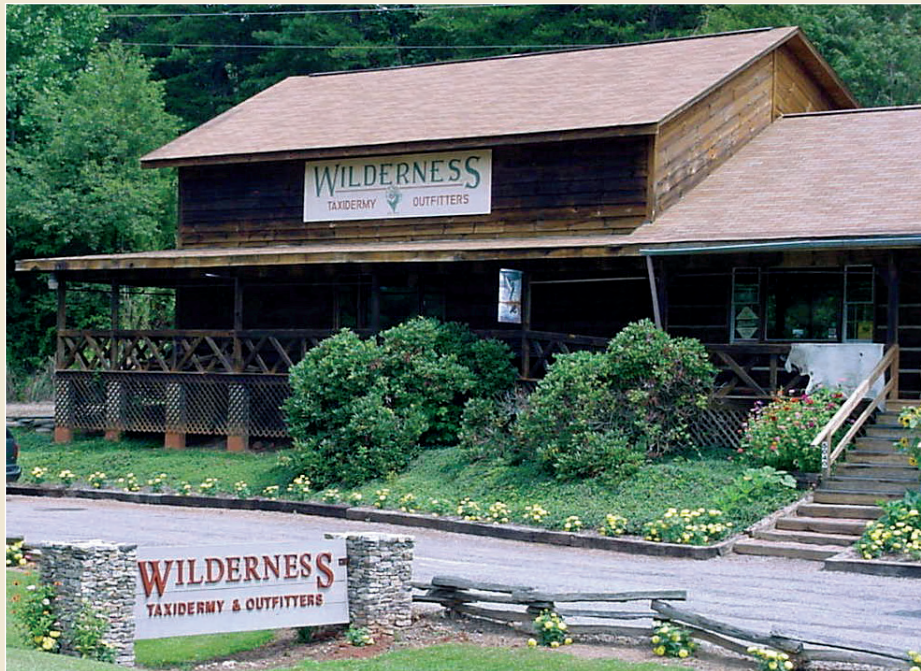
The Greater Fair Bluff Historical Society Depot Museum in Columbus County is located in the restored 1897 ACL passenger and freight depot and preserves the history of the town of Fair Bluff (pictured top left).

The Camden County Jail House Museum in Camden is located in the restored 1910 Camden County jail (pictured top right).

During the survey, NC ECHO found 14 jailhouse museums, 5 taxidermy museums, 11 fire station museums, and over 30 depot museums as well as many other unique and interesting institutions like the Tuba Exchange in Durham (pictured left).

Antiquities Vending Soda Machine Museum in Granite Falls, Caldwell County, displays over 1,000 fully restored soda machines (pictured lower left).

Belhaven Memorial Museum in Beaufort County was started with a collection of 30,000 of "Miss Eva's" buttons (pictured below) and includes artifacts such as Depression Era canned possum preserves and a flea circus.



Wilderness Taxidermy and Outfitters Museum in Franklin, Macon County, has a taxidermy exhibit and wildlife art gallery where visitors can view unique specimens from around the world.



The Caswell No. 1 Fire Station Museum in Kinston, Lenoir County, displays over a hundred years of fire-fighting artifacts including a 1922 American LaFrance pumper engine.



Institutions within the state are of varied types including public and private institutions, those run by government or by corporations, denominational institutions and academic ones, those administered by societies, and those incorporated into larger parent institutions that do not focus on cultural heritage. Whatever their origin or administrative structure, these institutions care for the state's historical record.



The North Carolina State Capitol in Raleigh is an example of a public institution. Administered by North Carolina State Historic Sites, the Capitol is owned by the people and is open to all.



Duke Energy Archive in Charlotte preserves the corporate records of Duke Energy Corporation. The collection includes many artifacts illustrating the evolution of electrification in Charlotte and Piedmont North Carolina. As is the case with many corporate institutions, the archive is open to public researchers by approved appointment only.



Bennett Classics Antique Auto Museum in Forest City, Rutherford County, is a private institution started from the personal antique car collection of brothers Buddy and Joe Bennett.



Tuttle Educational State Forest in Lenoir, Caldwell County, is a government-run institution that is designed to teach the public about the forest environment. Forest rangers conduct classes and guide tours especially created for schoolchildren, who learn about soil, water, wildlife, timber, and forest management.





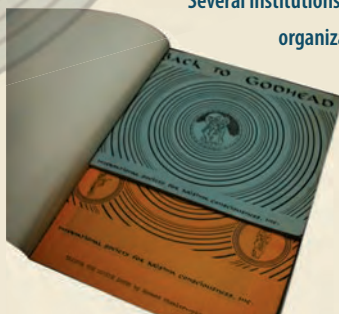
Almost all of North Carolina's academic institutions have a special collection or university archive. The Special Collections Research Center at North Carolina State University in Raleigh holds research and primary resource materials that focus on areas in which NC State has made a marked contribution to the development of the field, such as in plant and forestry genetics and genomics.



Historical, genealogical, and preservation societies run many of the state's cultural heritage institutions. The Wayne County Museum in Goldsboro is administered by the Wayne County Historical Association. Organized in 1955, the Association procured a former U.S.O. building to house exhibits illustrating the history of Wayne County and central eastern North Carolina.



The Jugtown Pottery Museum in Seagrove, Moore County, is an example of an institution administered by a parent organization that does not focus on cultural heritage. Jugtown Pottery is a studio owned by artists Vernon and Pam Owens, who craft pottery for sale in the retail shop. They created this museum on their property to honor the Jugtown tradition of potters and exhibit a large collection of original Jugtown pieces.



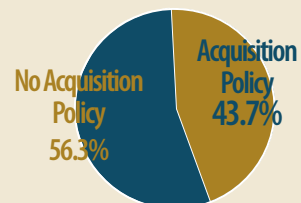
Several institutions are denominational and are administered by religious organizations. The Bhaktivedanta Archives in Sandy Ridge, Stokes County, is the official repository for the documents, manuscripts, correspondence, audio recordings, photographs, films, and other memorabilia of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, founder-acarya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

The staff of NC ECHO endeavored to survey every archives, museum, library, and historic site in the state—their collections, their missions, their challenges—and we got to know the people behind the institutions and to understand their inspirations and aspirations, their hopes and dreams. Staff have had the pleasure of meeting myriad individuals whose passion is preserving and sharing the story of our state. What an amazing discovery to learn that so many people care about history, art, and science and have worked with loving hearts and tireless hands to support and nurture nearly a thousand organizations dedicated to North Carolina's heritage.

Whether they are large or small, ancient or contemporary, artifacts, documents, photographs, audio-visual materials, or historic structures, the state's collections are diverse and interesting. These collections not only preserve and document North Carolina's material culture but also educate, enlighten, and even entertain. The collections tell stories about North Carolina's history and culture and just as frequently reveal the diversity of its people, regions, and contemporary culture.

## COLLECTIONS

### Written acquisition policy



**56.3%** of institutions indicated that they have no written acquisition or collection development policy that identifies the kinds of materials the institution accepts and the conditions or terms that affect these acquisitions. Several institutions qualified their responses by stating that a policy was in progress, the policy was not written but the parameters were known, a policy existed for the parent body but not for the department, the current policy was in need of revision, or that the institution was not actively collecting.



The Museum of American Cut and Engraved Glass in Highlands, Macon County, has an accession policy that focuses the museum's collecting. The museum exhibits cut and engraved glass primarily from the American Brilliant Period, 1876-1916.



The Brady C. Jefcoat Museum of Americana in Murfreesboro, Hertford County, is an institution where the collections are eclectic and varied but still focused. This museum houses thousands of items—from phonographs to historic toilets to washing machines, including one run by a dog-powered treadmill. Even though the items are diverse, they can all be classified as supporting the museum's goal of collecting Americana artifacts.





## Number of institutions holding types of media

<b>80.0%</b>	Paper records
<b>78.4%</b>	Photographs
<b>64.4%</b>	Artifacts
<b>57.3%</b>	Art objects
<b>50.8%</b>	Maps
<b>45.3%</b>	Videotapes
<b>36.6%</b>	Sound recordings
<b>33.1%</b>	Architectural drawings
<b>29.0%</b>	Microfilm and microfiche
<b>26.5%</b>	Computer media
<b>18.0%</b>	Motion picture film
<b>15.0%</b>	Other



**57.3%** of institutions have art objects in their collections. These corn husk dolls are part of the collection at the Museum of North Carolina Handicrafts in the historic Shelton House in Waynesville, Haywood County.



**36.6%** of institutions hold sound recordings in their collections. This collection of instantaneous discs in the archives at Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte documents the Biddle University Quintet, an a cappella singing group made up of students from this HBCU. The Quartet toured and sang from 1908 to 1926. The songs on these fragile discs have recently been digitized.



**78.4%** of institutions have photographs in their collections, and 61.2% consider photographs one of their collection strengths. This scrapbook from the Burgaw Municipal Project includes photographs of the electrification of Burgaw and is part of the local history collection at the Pender County Public Library in Burgaw.

Although only **35%** of institutions are archives and library special collections, **80.0%** of all institutions hold paper records. The Charlotte Museum of History & Hezekiah Alexander Homesite in Mecklenburg County has a large archival collection pertaining not only to Hezekiah Alexander and family but also to the history of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area in general.

Collections around the state vary in size from a handful of artifacts held in a small public library to collections that are the largest of their type in the world. No matter the size or scope, each collection adds to the state's rich and diverse cultural heritage.

There are 7 million photographs in North Carolina institutions. This photograph of the North Carolina Mutual Glee Club from 1928 is part of the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company's corporate archives located in Durham. NCM is the oldest and largest African American life insurance company in the United States.



## 200,688,946 linear feet of archival and special collections material



The North Carolina School of the Arts Moving Image Archive in Winston-Salem is the third largest non-commercial film archive in the country, with an extensive collection of feature films, live action and animated short films, documentaries, movie trailers, and newsreels.



archive of weather data. With files dating from the 1700s to the present day, the archive houses 200 million linear feet of records.

The National Climatic Data Center in Asheville is the world's largest active

### Number of artifacts and art objects

<b>11,295,396</b>	Archaeological
<b>512,100</b>	Botanical
<b>361,934</b>	Communication artifacts
<b>40,380</b>	Costumes and textiles
<b>39,074</b>	Decorative arts
<b>28,053</b>	Distribution and transportation artifacts
<b>72,237</b>	Furnishings
<b>27,330</b>	Geological
<b>11,342</b>	Paintings
<b>5,068</b>	Paleontological
<b>57,645</b>	Personal artifacts
<b>51,296</b>	Prints, drawings, and graphic arts
<b>7,167</b>	Recreational artifacts
<b>3,357</b>	Sculpture
<b>631</b>	Structures
<b>41,128</b>	Tools and equipment for communication
<b>51,731</b>	Tools and equipment for materials
<b>26,300</b>	Tools and equipment for science and technology
<b>1,221,959</b>	Zoological
<b>13,854,128</b>	<b>TOTAL artifacts and art objects</b>





Artifacts range in size from very large items like this Grumman QV-1 Mohawk airplane from the collection of the Carolinas Aviation Commission and Museum in Charlotte to the extremely small like this collection of sample of sand (right) from around the world found at the Wilmington Children's Museum in New Hanover County.

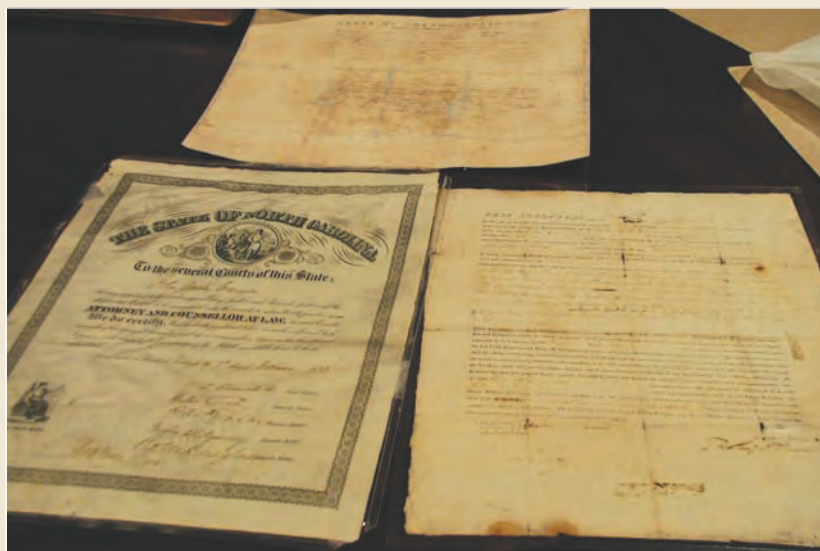


There are over 11 million archaeological objects in the state's collections. The majority of those are found at the Office of State Archaeology, Archaeological Research Center in Raleigh. These artifacts and specimens are procured from digs all over the state.



**35.7%** of institutions have costumes and textiles in their collections with more than forty thousand of these artifacts statewide. These examples of Quaker clothing are on display at the Museum of Old Domestic Life located in 1858 Quaker Meeting House in High Point, Guilford County.

The diversity of North Carolina's people and history is reflected in the wide variety of collection strengths found in its cultural heritage institutions. Collections revolve around topics from the seemingly obvious to the obscure and almost everything in between.



**68.5%** of institutions have a subject strength of local history in archival collections and **35.7%** have a strength in genealogy. Historical documents in the Mary Hadley Connor Leath Local History Room of the Thomas H. Leath Memorial Library in Rockingham, Richmond County, include a 1799 deed signed by Henry William Harrington, an early Richmond County land grant recipient, and John Paisley Cameron's license to practice law.

### Subject strengths of archival collections:

- 16.5%** African Americans
- 19.9%** Agriculture
- 20.8%** Arts and architecture
- 18.5%** Business, industry, and manufacturing
- 21.3%** Civil War
- 30.2%** Education
- 13.2%** Environmental affairs and natural resources
- 35.7%** Genealogy
- 5.9%** Labor
- 68.5%** Local history
- 11.4%** Medicine and health care
- 16.3%** Military
- 13.2%** Native Americans
- 13.7%** Politics, government, and law
- 16.8%** Religion
- 9.7%** Science and technology
- 13.9%** Transportation and communication
- 13.9%** Women



African American history is a subject strength for archival collections at **16.5%** of institutions. The North Carolina A&T University Archives in Greensboro, Guilford County, has a large Sit-In Collection documenting the students' participation in the Civil Rights Movement in Greensboro.



## Subject strengths of artifact and art collections

<b>15.7%</b>	Archaeological
<b>9.8%</b>	Ethnographical
<b>18.8%</b>	Folk culture
<b>10.5%</b>	Audio-visual
<b>35.7%</b>	Costumes and textiles
<b>25.4%</b>	Decorative arts
<b>35.2%</b>	Paintings
<b>61.2%</b>	Photographs
<b>29.6%</b>	Prints, drawings and graphic arts
<b>14.7%</b>	Sculpture
<b>18.8%</b>	Communication artifacts
<b>20.8%</b>	Distribution and transportation artifacts
<b>41.4%</b>	Furnishings
<b>18.2%</b>	Recreational artifacts
<b>43.2%</b>	Structures
<b>42.0%</b>	Tools and equipment for materials
<b>25.9%</b>	Tools and equipment for science and technology
<b>10.4%</b>	Botanical
<b>8.6%</b>	Geological
<b>5.4%</b>	Paleontological
<b>11.9%</b>	Zoological



**41.4%** of institutions listed furnishings as a subject strength for their collections. This photograph from the President James K. Polk State Historic Site in Pineville, Mecklenburg County, shows how the cabin would have been outfitted at the time of Polk's birth c. 1845.



For **43.2%** of institutions, a historic structure is part of the collection. This can be an institution that is housed in a historic building like the Chatham

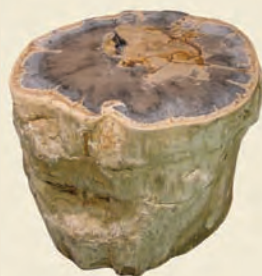
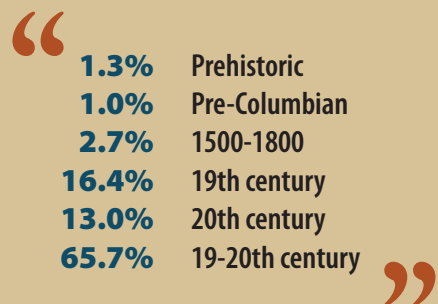


Historical Museum located in the Chatham County Courthouse in Pittsboro or a historic site with ancillary structures like this 1850 slave house at the Historic Stagville State Historic Site in Durham.



Distribution and transportation artifacts are a subject strength for **20.8%** of institutions. The C. Grier Beam Truck Museum in Cherryville, Gaston County, preserves the history of the trucking industry and particularly the Carolina Freight Carriers Corporation, begun in 1932. The photograph shows the first truck owned by company founder C. Grier Beam.

# What is the predominant date range of your institution's collection?

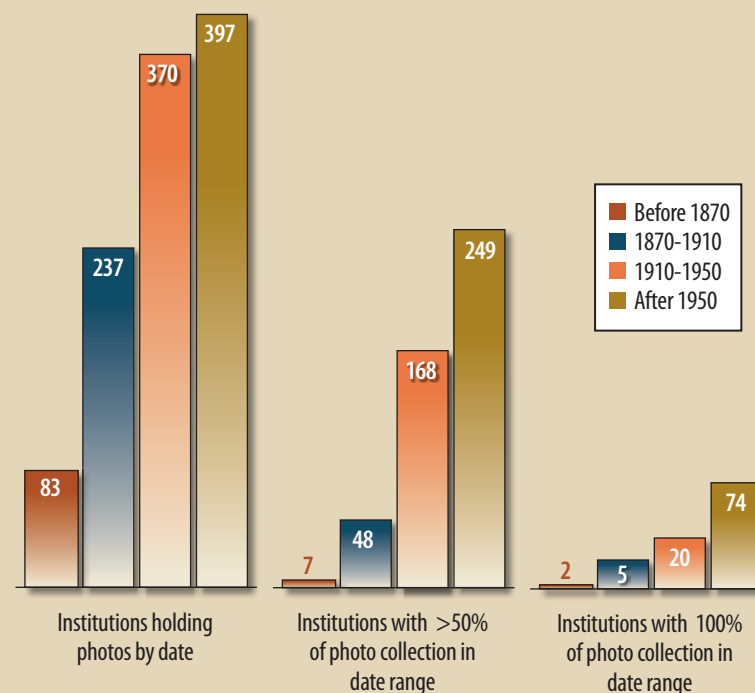


Collections around the state range from the very old like this petrified log from Indonesia at the Mineral and Lapidary Museum of Henderson County in Hendersonville to much more current items like this pair of shoes belonging to beloved North Carolina State University basketball coach Jim Valvano in the collection of the Scotland County Historic Properties Commission in Laurinburg.



Most photographs post-date 1950. This photograph of three Eagle Scouts from Pitt County was taken in 1962 and is part of the Daily Reflector Image Collection at East Carolina University in Greenville. (Image courtesy of ECU, Daily Reflector Negative Collection, 741.27.b.34)

## Number of institutions with photographs by date







The Penderlea Homestead Museum in Penderlea, Pender County, interprets a restored Depression Era New Deal subsistence homestead community. The museum collects only artifacts within the narrow time range of the mid 1930s.



The majority of collections in the state represent the 19th and 20th centuries. These spinning and weaving artifacts from the early 19th century are interpreted at the Historic Carson House in Old Fort, McDowell County.



Collections at the Museum of the Cherokee Indian in Cherokee, Swain County, relate the story of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and range from the pre-historic to the contemporary.



The Museum of the Alphabet in Waxhaw, Union County, traces the history of alphabets and other writing systems from ancient times to the present. Museum displays chronicle ancient and modern alphabet makers and feature the history and evolution of written language, including Greek, Roman, Hebrew, Arabic, and Asian alphabets.

## ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS

North Carolina's institutions collect and care for records and objects not only to preserve them, but also so that they may be used and enjoyed. Annually, over 13 million people benefit from the activities of North Carolina's cultural heritage institutions. These users come as tourists seeking local history and culture, as scholarly researchers delving into primary source materials, as genealogists tracing family lines, as students experiencing school field trips, as employees facilitating institutional operations, or simply as enthusiasts for the materials that these institutions preserve.



**13,545,926**  
Annual visitors  
& researchers



School groups are an important part of museum and historic site visitation. (Students enjoying an exhibit at the Hickory Museum of Art, Catawba County).



North Carolina's citizens make use of their cultural heritage. **97.8%** of institutions report that the majority of their visitors are from within the state. (Visitors to the Mountain Farm Museum in Cherokee, Swain County).



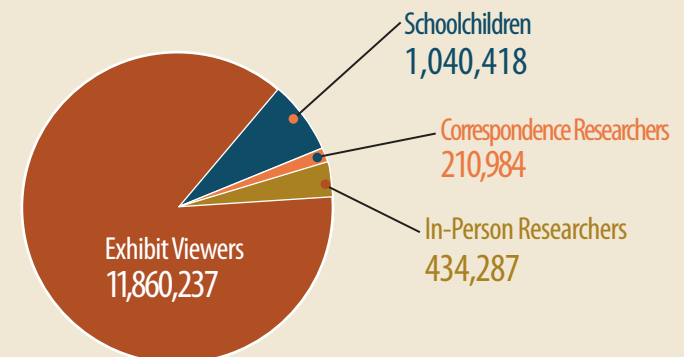
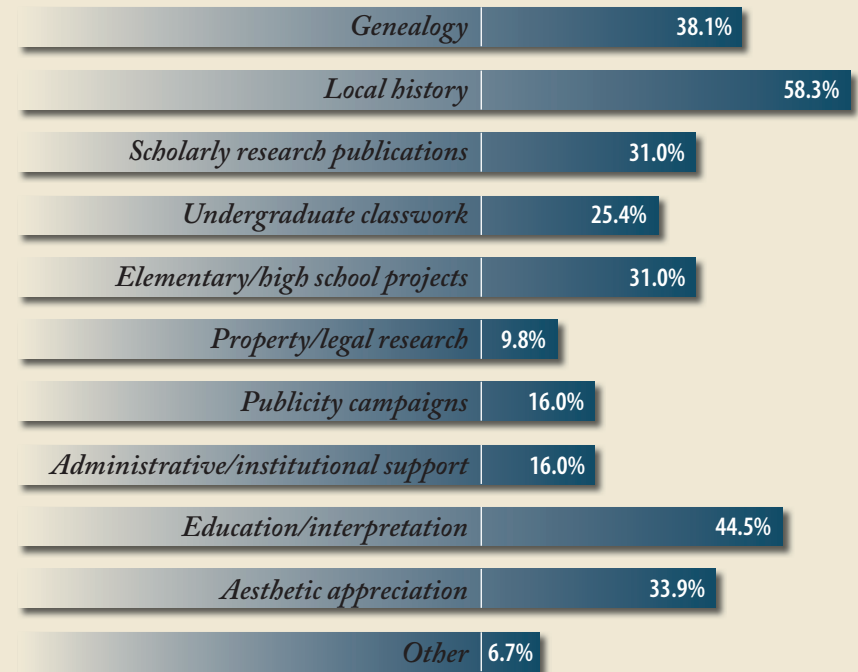
# Comments from survey respondents regarding use of collections

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- Attendance has dropped because schools have fewer field trips
- 10,000 visitors at festival in three days and 1,500 throughout the year
- 3rd most-popular way that people hear about this site is the road signs!!!
- 4th graders used to do NC notebooks but not so much anymore
- 50% school groups
- 50,000 visitors came in the museum; 885,000 visitors came to the park
- All of our efforts are for education/ interpretation and other by-products such as providing resources for research
- Almost all use relates to genealogical research
- Because our collections are largely uncataloged, we do not receive much use
- Hours have been cut; closed on weekends for two years
- In summer 26-50% come from outside NC; winter 11-25%
- Increase in use since digitization project has been up
- Museum open for two festivals per year only
- Ongoing debate over entertainment vs. education
- Patrons need better access to these materials; electronic format with keyword searching would be invaluable
- It is difficult to work with schools and hard to arrange field trips to the museum
- Required 8th-grade field trip for the county
- Very infrequent public use of archives due to limited scope of collection and requirement that research be scholarly and original
- Visitation is down because educator is gone; hope visitation will go up so we can hire a new educator
- Visitation will increase dramatically since we have recently opened regular hours and have a permanent home

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## How are the collections used?





# 97.1% of institutions have some degree of

Providing access to collections is possible through the maintenance of intellectual control and by employing discovery mechanisms that make it possible to locate the items and information about them.

97.1% of institutions have some degree of intellectual control over at least a portion of their collections.

However, NC ECHO observed, and many institutions expressed, that very few have discovery mechanisms in place for their entire collections and that processing backlogs prevent them from making all of their materials accessible.



The lack of finding aids, catalogs and other access tools is the largest impediment to use of the state's collections. NC ECHO staff visited a library special collection where the librarian could not locate a 16th-century manuscript from the rare book collection. This was probably due to misfiling, but no one could be sure since there are no finding aids, shelf lists, or inventories of the rare book holdings.





# intellectual control over at least a portion of their collections.



Nearly all institutions have some intellectual control over their collections. This control ranges from rudimentary handwritten inventories and shelf lists to old-style card catalogs to fully automated collections management systems and online finding aids.



## Discovery mechanisms used by institutions

<i>Card catalog</i>	29.4%
<i>Collection inventory</i>	42.9%
<i>Typewritten register</i>	37.9%
<i>Printed guide</i>	9.3%
<i>Online public access catalog</i>	50.7%
<i>Website</i>	28.8%

## Impediments to the use of collections

<i>Can't physically locate</i>	15.4%
<i>Lack of finding aids</i>	37.2%
<i>Necessary equipment not available</i>	10.9%
<i>Records deteriorated beyond use</i>	4.1%
<i>Processing backlogs</i>	36.3%

15

15 institutions reported no written catalog of records/objects and that the institution relied solely on staff memory to locate collections.

While this is a tiny portion of all the institutions surveyed, it is still troubling since these collections are at risk of being misplaced or becoming unidentifiable after current staff leave. During one of NC ECHO's earliest site visits, staff asked the local history volunteer how items in the collection were organized and cataloged. She responded, "I've got it all in my head".



A false bottom wagon used by Quakers at Mendenhall Plantation in Guilford County to transport escaping slaves on the Underground Railroad.

## Which of your specific collections get the most use?

“

Florence Nightingale letters  
1901 coin-operated electricity meter  
Fire truck  
False-bottom wagon  
Parisian living room wallpaper  
Barber chair  
Race car  
Snow globes  
Iron lung  
Soda machines  
Corn sheller  
Saddam Hussein's gold weapons  
Grist mill  
Environmental justice collection  
Rock house  
Oral histories  
Aerial/topographic maps  
Motion pictures  
Decline of black farming collection  
Digitized info on web  
Newspapers  
Cherokee river cane baskets  
Cotton and textile exhibit  
Highland games collection

Nursing collection  
Waldensian story  
Furniture manufacturing collection  
Traditional African art  
Family histories  
Sit-ins  
Siamese twins collection  
College catalogs/yearbooks  
Dolls  
Military costumes  
Gourds  
Government statutes  
Historic railroad equipment  
Institutional archives  
Quaker meeting records  
Rocks and minerals  
Shipwreck files  
Masks  
Turtle stuff  
Diorama, beehive  
Fred the fire horse  
Jars, buttons, fleas, farm implements  
Oz theme-park collection



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The growth of the internet has brought increased expectations for online access to collections. While viewing materials online does not replace seeing them in person, digitization is becoming an important tool for cultural heritage institutions interested in serving a wider audience.

North Carolina's cultural institutions have produced many strong individual digitization projects, and some institutions have successfully integrated digital programs into their missions and budgets.

Through a partnership between the North Carolina State Archives, the Outer Banks History Center, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, over 1,500 historic North Carolina maps are being digitized. This project will allow users to interact with the maps in new ways in the online environment.

Survey findings, however, reveal that the majority of North Carolina's institutions have not yet undertaken digitization projects. No more than 26.0% of institutions responded to the digitization-related questions of the survey, suggesting that three-fourths of all institutions are not active in digitization.

**In-house digitization 90.5%**  
**Outsourced digitization 9.5%**

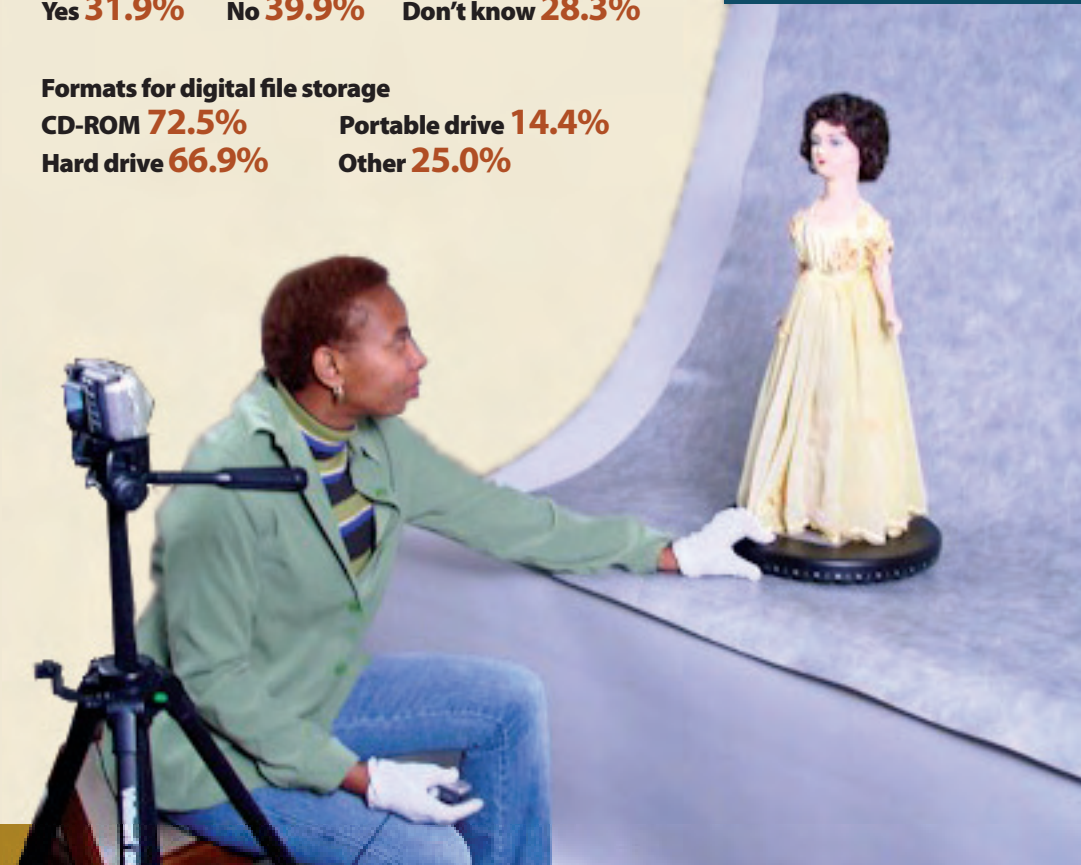
**Documentation of digitization efforts?**  
**Yes 45.9% No 54.1%**

**Maintain separate digital master files and access files?**  
**Yes 56.4% No 43.6%**

**Do the digital files follow a standard description model such as Dublin Core?**  
**Yes 31.9% No 39.9% Don't know 28.3%**

**Formats for digital file storage**  
**CD-ROM 72.5% Portable drive 14.4%**  
**Hard drive 66.9% Other 25.0%**

Meredith College completed a unique digitization project that increased access to over a hundred years of Meredith history through 360-degree-rotation digital camera capture of the beloved class dolls.



## STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

North Carolina's cultural heritage institutions would not exist were it not for the effort and dedication of more than 15,000 people who serve the state's institutions as paid career professionals and support staff, volunteers, student workers, interns, and in other capacities.

The NC ECHO survey identified some institutions with full professional staffs, but found many more organizations run by a single paid staff member. Sometimes that staff member is assisted by volunteers, but, especially in archives and library special collections, he or she may operate without any help. For local history museums and archives, the survey found that staff often consists solely of volunteers. Regardless of their status, these cultural caretakers look after the state's collections and create environments where visitors and researchers can enjoy and appreciate the history and culture of North Carolina.



**Helen Wykle** is the special collections librarian at the University of North Carolina Asheville's D. H. Ramsey Library. The Special Collections and University Archives is only one department in the large academic library. This is the case for several institutions where care of cultural heritage collections is not the main mission of the parent institution.







**Bill Brown**, Safety Director at Broughton Hospital in Morganton, Burke County, is a third-generation employee of the state psychiatric facility. Bill is concerned that the history of this organization will be lost. Although not part of his official responsibilities, Bill rescues items like this patient wheelchair from state surplus and creates exhibits in the administration building lobby in an effort to preserve the history of the hospital.

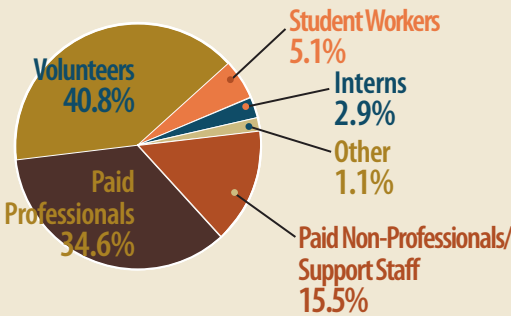


**Becky Griffin** is the part-time Executive Director of the Mint Hill Historical Society's Carl J. McEwen Historical Village in Mecklenburg County. She and her volunteer staff have worked to preserve the rural history of the town of



Mint Hill through restoring several buildings including a country doctor's office, country store, and schoolhouse.

### 3,206.12 Full time equivalent workers in North Carolina's institutions



### Areas of training needed for staff and volunteers

<i>Preservation, conservation methods</i>	67.4%
<i>Archival methods</i>	63.5%
<i>Fundraising, grant writing</i>	63.1%
<i>Digital imaging</i>	57.2%
<i>Database management</i>	51.3%
<i>Disaster preparedness</i>	50.9%
<i>Curatorial methods</i>	50.7%
<i>Appraisal, collection development</i>	48.0%
<i>Public relations, outreach</i>	47.2%
<i>Exhibit creation</i>	46.1%
<i>Programming</i>	37.2%
<i>Copyright</i>	35.6%
<i>Electronic records management</i>	32.2%
<i>Other</i>	5.9%



Many volunteer-run museums and archives expressed concern that volunteers are mostly retirees. One institution told NC ECHO that the most needed addition to the museum was “a younger person to learn the collection.” (Ms. Sarah Grissop volunteers her time at the Brevard Station Museum in Gaston County.)

Almost all institutions indicated a need for increased staff or volunteers. In many institutions, one person undertakes multiple responsibilities. When asked what primary duty would be assigned to a new staff member, one institution responded, “We don’t have enough staff to assign anyone a primary duty.” Yet being short-staffed does not stop institutions from branching out to reach their audiences. As Sharon Snow of Wake Forest University’s Special Collections told NC ECHO on a site visit, “We’ve got our fingers in a lot of pies, but it’s good pie.”

Jack-of-all trades  
Administrative or office manager  
**Clerical work or secretary** Librarian  
COLLECTION MANAGEMENT  
MANAGEMENT  
Catalo  
Archivist Grant writing  
DATABASE MANAGEMENT  
Conservation or preservation  
DIGITIZATION, Curator  
Education or outreach  
**Fundraising**  
Processing collections  
Public relations or marketing  
Security Reference  
Website management or IT  
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR  
NO HELP NEEDED  
Custodial or maintenance

**“If you could add one employee, what would be that person’s primary duty or responsibility?”**

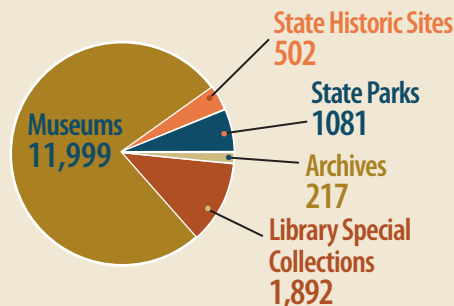
- 47** Processing collections
- 36** Archivist
- 36** Cataloger
- 36** Education or outreach
- 35** Curator
- 31** Administrative or office manager
- 24** Jack-of-all-trades
- 22** Clerical work or secretary
- 19** Collection management
- 18** Librarian
- 16** Conservation or preservation
- 16** Digitization
- 16** Fundraising
- 15** Custodial or maintenance
- 13** Public relations or marketing
- 11** Tour guide
- 10** Website management or IT
- 9** Registrar
- 7** No help needed
- 7** Volunteer coordinator
- 6** Database management
- 5** Grant writing
- 2** Reference
- 2** Security



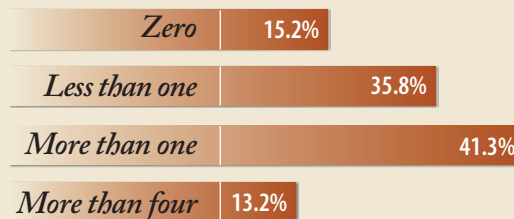
Volunteers are essential to the workforce of many institutions, and in fact, **25.7%** of institutions have no professional employees and are staffed solely by volunteers. (Carl Moore is a volunteer at the Old County Jail Museum in Clay County).



**15,681 employees and volunteers in North Carolina's cultural heritage institutions**



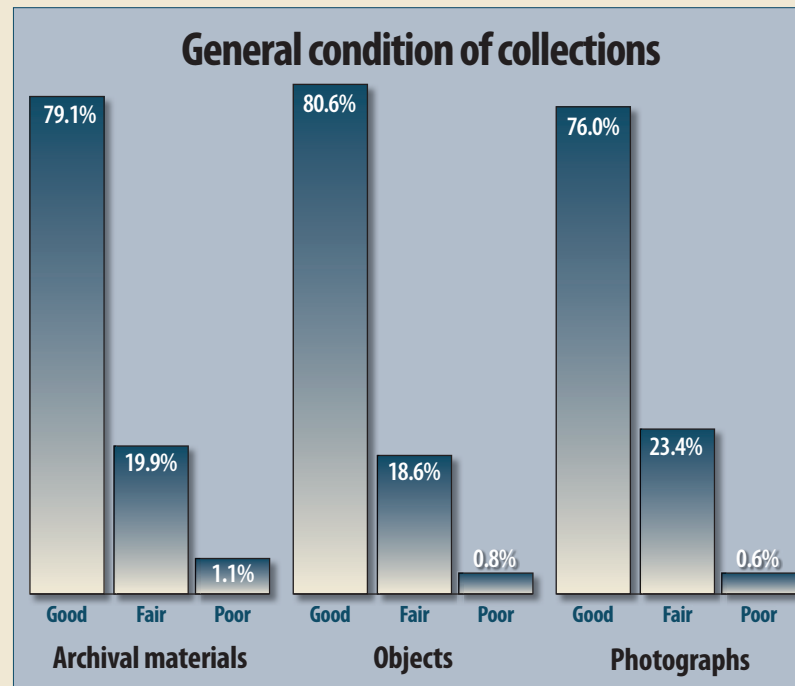
**Paid Professional Staff (full-time-equivalents)**



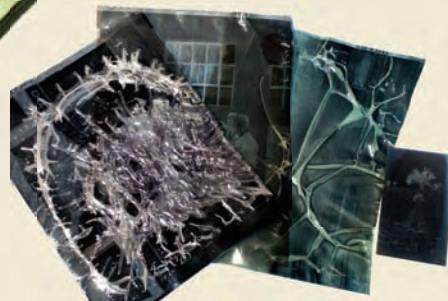
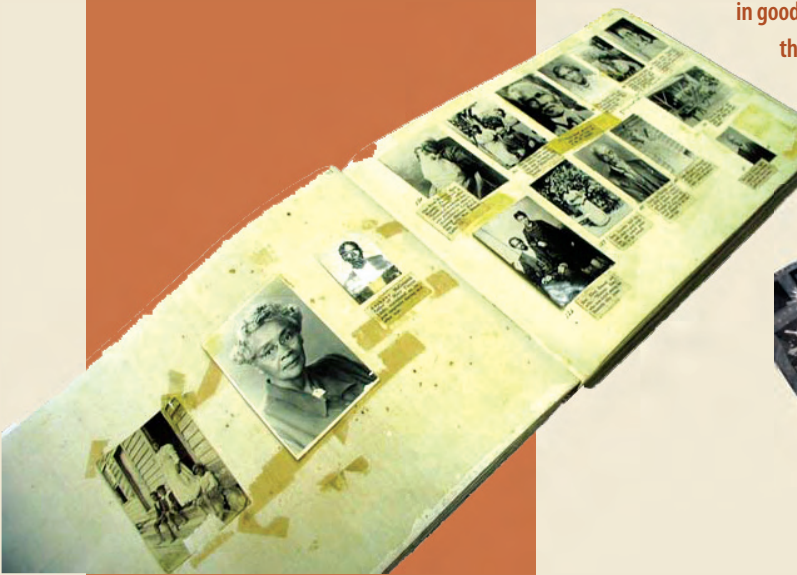
**13.2%** of institutions employ more than four full-time-equivalent paid professional staff. Staff in the Mammals Unit of the Research and Collections Section of the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences includes curator Lisa Gartens, collection technician Levi Vargas, and collection manager Benjamin Hess. Photo: Steve Exum.

# COLLECTIONS CARE

The NC ECHO survey shows that the majority of holdings within North Carolina's cultural heritage institutions are in good physical condition. North Carolina is fortunate that this is the case, because relatively few of North Carolina's institutions have the tools and facilities at their disposal to ensure collection longevity. To keep materials from deteriorating, institutions must be able to properly monitor and control collection storage environments and plan ahead for disasters both natural and manmade.



While most institutions report that their collections are generally in good condition, almost all institutions have some items in their collections that are in need of conservation. This is due both to a lack of funding for preservation and to a lack of expertise, particularly in the smaller and volunteer-run institutions.



The collections in the best condition are those stored and exhibited in proper housing containers in environmentally controlled spaces. UNC Charlotte's University Archives (pictured above) uses acid-free folders in archival boxes along with temperature and humidity controls to prevent deterioration of the documents. The Southern Highland Craft Guild in Asheville (pictured below) stores the handmade crafts collections in museum storage drawers with microfoam lining.

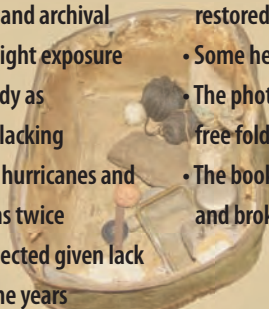
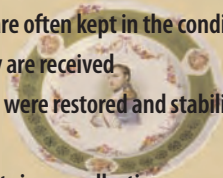
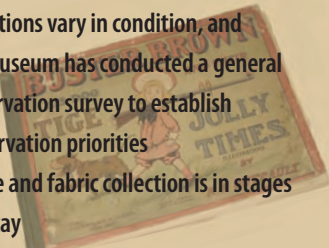




# Are you specifically concerned with any portion of your collection?

“

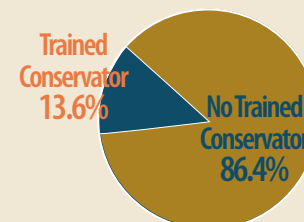
- Collections worn but generally in good condition
- Condition is a consideration for acquisition
- Do not have budget, knowledge, or time to provide professional long-term preservation
- Collections vary in condition, and the museum has conducted a general preservation survey to establish conservation priorities
- Textile and fabric collection is in stages of decay
- Recent addition of a heat and air system will help stabilize condition of collections and stop deterioration of exhibits
- Some items are hard to identify because of their condition
- Most objects given to us come from local families who have kept them in good condition. A dry building and loving attention keeps them that way
- Some exhibited documents and archival items are yellowing due to light exposure
- Some stuff is becoming moldy as environmental controls are lacking
- Have had flooding from the hurricanes and have had to move collections twice
- Condition is better than expected given lack of basic preservation over the years
- Two staff conservators specialize in textiles and costumes and work on the collection
- The museum is emerging from an all-volunteer staff to a paid professional staff, and in that process, the collections are improving as are the conditions in which they are stored and exhibited
- The North Carolina Museum of Art conducted a survey of the portrait collection and did on-site conservation
- Some archival materials are in poor shape and are housed in non-archival boxes
- Materials are often kept in the condition in which they are received
- Collections were restored and stabilized after the flood
- Most objects in our collection were damaged in a fire in 1998. 800 items were in the collection and 200 were destroyed. Remaining items have been professionally restored and returned to the collection
- Some heat lamination of documents
- The photographs in the collection need acid free folders or Mylar sleeves
- The books are brittle with some spines torn and broken but intact



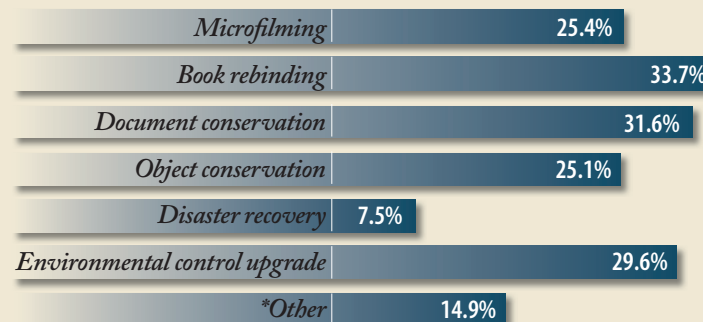
”



A small percentage (13.6%) of institutions are able to retain a professionally trained conservator on staff like this textiles conservator at the North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh. Yet even without an in-house conservator, more than a fourth of institutions undertook some form of preservation measures in the year before the survey.



## Conservation and preservation measures undertaken in the year preceeding the survey



\*Includes preservation photocopying, encapsulation, facility repairs, rebinding, reformatting, upgrade to security system, etc.

# 1,728,724 total square feet of storage space at institutions statewide

Collections are often stored in structures or housed in containers that are inadequate. Providing stable environments for old or fragile materials is impossible for some institutions given their financial circumstances and other inhibiting factors. 59.8% of institutions consider their storage space inadequate and 18.5% consider lack of exhibit and storage space as the institution's most pressing problem.



Some institutions, like the Louise Wells Cameron Art Museum in Wilmington pictured above left, have resources to properly store collections. Other institutions deal with less than ideal conditions. This archive pictured above right is subject to water leaks because of its basement location. This history museum pictured left has to keep collections in plastic bins to combat poor environmental conditions in the outbuilding used for storage.



Where do institutions store collections?

**42.9%** Office area  
**35.4%** Stack area  
**48.1%** Storage room  
**9.4%** Warehouse  
**63.6%** On exhibit  
**34.7%** Attic, basement, closet





The survey found 82 institutions like the Northern Wayne Heritage Museum in Wayne County that store **100%** of their collections on exhibit due to a lack of storage space. This situation is not ideal since collections benefit from rotating into storage where they are, at least theoretically, in a more protected environment.

### Storage space

- 59.8%** of institutions report inadequate storage space
- 12.7%** indicate that storage space is already full and another 29.5% will reach capacity within one year
- 20.4%** have less than 500 square feet of available storage
- 75.4%** have no off-site storage

## Comments about storage of collections

- Main storage has no heat or humidity controls
- None of the historic buildings have climate controls
- Facility was not designed to be a museum
- Lack of adequate proper storage is a problem that makes it hard to properly process and preserve records and virtually impossible to implement a sound records management program
- Excellent modern facility
- Most archival materials are stored in the basement. There is too much moisture, and the humidifier is of limited help. The basement is subject to flooding, and mold is growing on some materials
- All our historic structures have new humidity and climate controls
- Overloaded shelves. There was no eye to the future when the room was designed
- There is no space in the current building for expansion of collections, which remain small
- No smoke detectors!
- Big windows expose exhibit items to lots of natural light, but replacement windows are being systematically installed
- Storage space is overcrowded and improperly arranged. The area is affected by heat and cold changes and mold problems
- Need a bigger space for less money
- Facilities are small and cramped
- Most archival material is stored in a private home right now
- Available facilities are adequate for our larger exhibits of railroad equipment, cars, and locomotives but we do lack adequate space for small items and paper goods
- Environmental monitoring systems are outdated, and we want to upgrade to a digital tracking system





Some deterioration of collection materials is inevitable, but loss can be controlled. While many institutions have environmental controls in place for the collections on exhibit or in the stacks, these protections do not always extend to collections housed in alternative storage locations such as attics, basements, outbuildings, and even bathrooms. Only 7.5% of institutions have 100% of their collections protected with year-round temperature controls, year-round humidity controls, fire detectors, a fire suppression system, a security system, air filters, and UV filters. Alarming, 13.7% reported that none of their collections are protected with any of these environmental controls.

## Institutions with NO environmental controls

	Archives	Library Special Collections	Museums	State Historic Sites
No year-round temperature controls	16.1%	15.4%	29.4%	29.2%
No year-round humidity controls	45.2%	59.4%	67.8%	70.8%
No fire detection	25.8%	26.1%	33.1%	20.8%
No fire suppression	83.7%	74.4%	70.6%	75.0%
No security system	25.8%	30.8%	32.6%	41.7%
No air filtration	25.8%	24.4%	35.4%	41.7%
No UV filters	12.9%	24.4%	29.7%	29.2%



**68.4%** of institutions have no security systems in place to prevent theft and vandalism of collections. In response to a series of thefts, the North Carolina State Archives in Raleigh added a video recording security system to monitor areas where collections are used.

**Q:**  
What percentage of institutions surveyed use the following environmental controls to protect a portion of their collections?



**76.0%** Year-round temperature controls  
**35.6%** Year-round humidity controls  
**70.2%** Fire detection  
**29.2%** Fire suppression  
**68.4%** Security systems  
**68.7%** Air filtration  
**72.9%** UV filters



# Comments about environmental storage conditions of collections



More than a fourth of all institutions (**29.8%**) have no fire detection system in place, and **70.8%** have no equipment installed for fire suppression. This situation can end tragically as it did in 2008 when the Frank T. Williams Railroad Museum at Tweetsie Railroad Park burned completely, destroying a collection of artifacts of North Carolina's beloved singing cowboy, Fred Kirby.

It is imperative to sustain acceptable levels for temperature and humidity in collection storage environments to maintain the health of the collections. Institutions face increased difficulty because collections of varied media types require different conditions. Nearly a quarter of all institutions (**24.0%**) have no year-round temperature controls, and **64.4%** have no year-round humidity controls. In environments where temperature and humidity levels are allowed to fluctuate, collections risk outbreaks of mold and mildew.



- “
- Fire extinguishers are available, but there is no fire suppression system
  - All historic structures have humidity and climate control
  - Currently we badly need a year-round humidity control
  - There are a few items in uncontrolled environments in the historic buildings
  - Humidity/temp control is the original system from 1967
  - Storage facility has no heat/humidity control, no smoke alarm or sprinkler, and no security system
  - House is in a 10-mile radius of the Nuclear Plant and is under that disaster plan
  - Grant application is currently under review to provide more protection from light
  - Big windows expose exhibits to lots of natural light, and many photos are at risk, but replacement windows are presently being installed
  - Sprinkler system has taken all the money
  - Main storage has no heat or humidity controls
  - Minimal climate controls; systems in place operate marginally
  - Need extermination
  - None of historic buildings have climate controls
  - No smoke detectors!
  - Problems with leaky air conditioner in the photo area
  - Environmental monitoring systems are outdated; want to upgrade to digital tracking system
  - Need humidity control; need to circulate the air
- ”

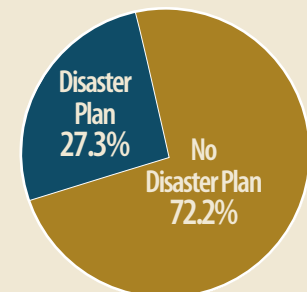
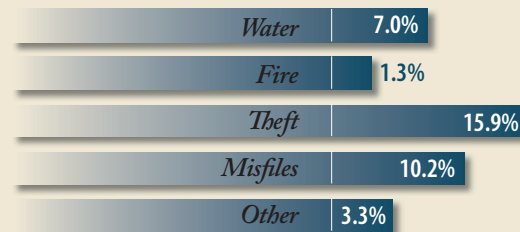


Collections loss is unfortunate whether it comes from preventable events, like humidity-related mold breakouts, or catastrophic events, such as the flooding in Princeville after Hurricane Floyd. Both types of loss can be mitigated when an institution implements a preservation plan that includes installation of environmental controls and a disaster preparedness and recovery plan.



## 28.9% of institutions reported some kind of loss of collections within the last year

Collection loss in the last three years





# From Out of the Ashes

## Thomas Wolfe Memorial Fire Story

damaged by the smoke, water and intense heat. Later, staff determined that the arson fire had destroyed 30% of the original structure and 15% of the artifact collection.

Site staff, working with restoration architects, took this unfortunate incident and turned it into an opportunity to undo modernization changes and updates made to the house and to restore it to the way it looked in 1916, the year Thomas Wolfe left home for college. The house reopened in May 2004 with new smoke alarms and a sprinkler system, which hopefully will prevent another disaster of this kind.

Although the NC State Historic Sites program did not have formal disaster plans prior to this fire, it did emphasize the need for such plans. Today, each site in the system has a formal, site-specific Emergency Preparedness, Evacuation, and Response Plan. In addition, the division has purchased a trailer and is outfitting it with supplies and equipment in preparation for future disasters.



In July 1998, fire crews responded to an early-morning fire at the Thomas Wolfe Memorial State Historic Site in Asheville. Staff from the Wolfe House, along with volunteers from the staff at the neighboring Biltmore Estate and Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site, arrived at the scene to find the house nearly fully engulfed. These disaster response workers set up a triage area behind the house to catalog artifacts rescued from the fire and assess their condition. The contents of the dining room and several pieces of furniture in an upstairs bedroom were destroyed in the fire, and objects throughout the house were

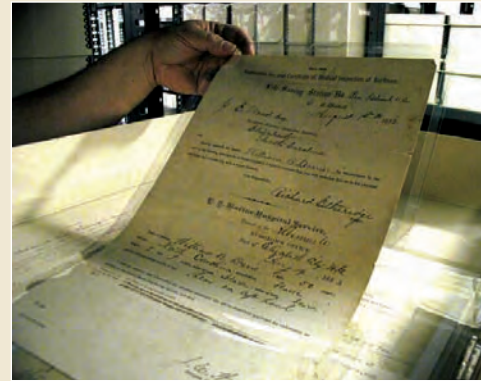
Implementing a disaster preparedness and recovery plan is a critical but often neglected step in collection care. **72.7%** of institutions have no written disaster plan, although **61.8%** list disaster plan development as a priority for the institution. **7.5%** of institutions responded to a disaster on some scale during the year before the survey.



## RESOURCES

Caring for North Carolina's cultural heritage collections requires an ongoing commitment of resources from institutions. The three most pressing problems confronting institutions are inadequacies in funding, lack of professional staffing, and insufficient exhibit and storage space. In addition to these issues, institutions indicated several other priorities for improvement, such as encouraging use of collections, preserving collections, improving staff training, and developing disaster plans. Lack of funding is the biggest obstacle for many institutions, and increased and sustained financial support could help mitigate many of the other problems as well.

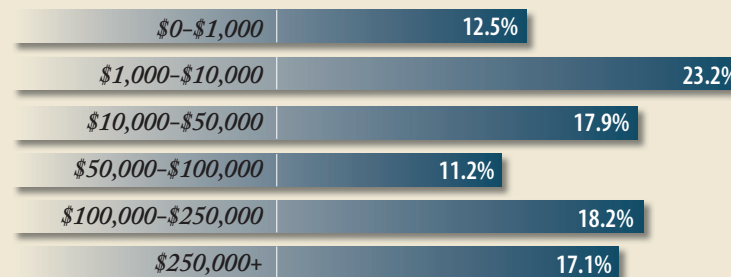
Inadequate funding is a challenge facing institutions in every budget range, but especially for those with the smallest income. More than a third of all institutions (35.7%) operate on a budget of less than \$10,000 and 12.5% get by on a shoestring of less than \$1,000. Only 17.1% of institutions receive an annual budget of more than \$250,000. And while many needs of institutions go unmet due to funding shortfalls, staff and volunteers still work toward their missions of providing care for and access to the state's collections.



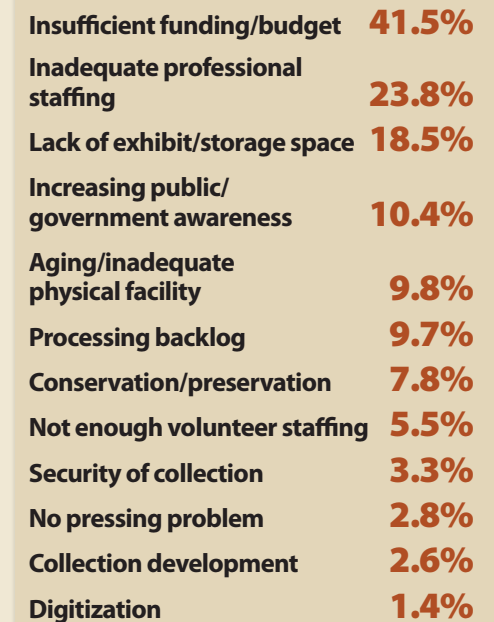
The needs and priorities of the state's institutions are diverse, ranging from improved storage conditions like this compact shelving at the Johnston County Heritage Center in Smithfield, to better preservation of collections such as document encapsulation seen here at the Cape Hatteras National Seashore in Manteo, Dare County.



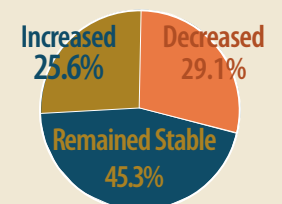
### Institution Budget



## Most pressing problems



### Budget over the last 3 years

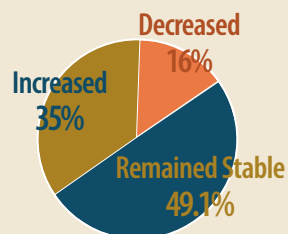




## Needs and priorities

Increase funding	<b>92.1%</b>
Raise awareness and use of collections	<b>81.3%</b>
Boost staff training	<b>81.1%</b>
Preservation of collections	<b>79.5%</b>
Increase storage capacity	<b>75.8%</b>
Improve storage conditions	<b>71.5%</b>
Improve finding aids	<b>71.5%</b>
Develop disaster plan	<b>61.2%</b>
Increase solicitation of collections	<b>59.3%</b>
Increase exhibit space	<b>56.6%</b>
Process backlog	<b>55.4%</b>
Automate description systems	<b>54.2%</b>
Reformat collection	<b>48.5%</b>
Develop acquisitions policy	<b>45.1%</b>
Develop policies for new media	<b>40.4%</b>

### Budget expectations in the next 3 years



**92.1%** of institutions indicated a priority to increase funding, with **41.5%** listing inadequate funding as the institution's most pressing problem.

## What is the most pressing problem confronting your institution?

- Consistent funding
- Volunteers! Volunteers! Volunteers!
- Temporary location
- Backlog of collections and lack of staff to catch up
- Space or staffing - a toss-up
- Money; continuing decreases in funding!
- Cataloging the backlog of materials; environmental controls for storage areas; film storage
- Aging physical facility, funding, and capital needs
- Lack of paid staff
- Collection is peripheral to library mission
- Funding to remain open year-round
- Space; better leadership
- Environmental controls
- Taxes
- Getting schoolchildren to visit
- What will happen to the collection when Ruthie can no longer oversee it!
- Chronic reduction of funding; lack of local governmental support
- Clarifying the mission; putting more emphasis on education and interpretation
- Collection development
- Funding long-term; making the museum self-perpetuating; publicity
- Electronic records; born digital documents
- Need for publicity; more exposure
- Appealing to the next generation of volunteers and supporters while getting children interested
- Handicap accessibility and safety concerns
- Low visitation
- Lack of expertise
- Making it secure and accessible—rare items are so secure they are not accessible
- Need new building
- Preservation of collection
- Lack of funding from State budget; lots of turnover because of low salaries.
- The number of active volunteers continues to get smaller over time
- Just too much work; need time to do everything.
- Money, but really cataloging backlog!
- Having enough core personnel to accomplish the work that needs to be done

Very few institutions receive all their funding from a single source, instead finding multiple ways to raise financial support. The two most prevalent means of funding are private donations and regular government appropriations, with a much larger percentage of monies coming from government appropriations. For most institutions, less than 25% of their funding comes from grants, fundraising, admission fees, membership dues, or private endowments. An increase in support from these funding sources would benefit the institutions.

## What are some observations regarding funding?

- “
- It's hard to plan when you never know what your share of the budget is
  - [Museum founder] pays for everything
  - Find funding by any means necessary
  - Initial money came from city, county, and individuals; continuation budget will be reliant on individual donations
  - No budget
  - Need more grants. Exhibit and staff salary monies are needed. Town, county, and tourism grants are 99% of the museum's operating budget
  - Our big givers have died and are not being replaced; we are considering our cash assets as 'endowments' and use interest only when needed

- Scrambling for funds
- We cannot continue to operate entirely on membership funds. We need a new computer and digitizing system, archival supplies, a security system—and those are just the top priorities
- Admissions all go to child abuse prevention charity
- Endowment covers all necessary costs
- No line item for special collections; anything for special collections is purchased from 'supply line'
- [Corporation] provides all funding



### Funding sources for institutions

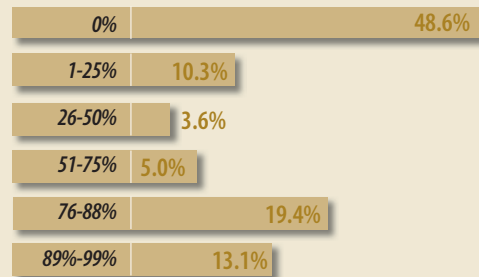
- 54.1%** Receive private donations
- 51.4%** Receive regular government appropriations
- 28.8%** Undertake fundraising activities
- 25.3%** Collect membership dues
- 20.6%** Receive government grants
- 20.4%** Receive private grants
- 17.3%** Receive private endowments
- 17.1%** Charge admission fees



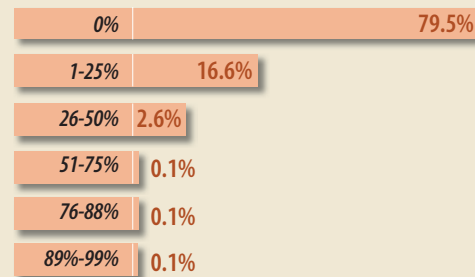
Funding sources vary with the scope and mission of the institution. The North Carolina Baseball Museum in Wilson gets **75%** of its funds from private donations and **25%** from fundraising. No government monies or grant monies are used. The museum



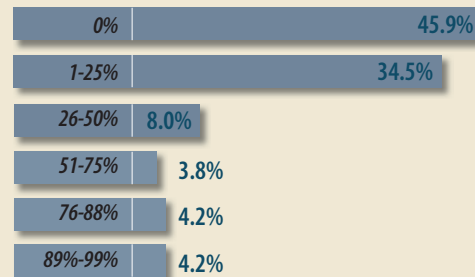
### Percentage of funding from regular government appropriation



### Percentage of funding from government and private grants



### Percentage of funding from private donations



board felt that it was important to raise its own money from the local community and baseball enthusiasts. In contrast, there are institutions like the North Carolina State Archives in Raleigh, a government-mandated records repository that receives **98%** of its funding from regular government appropriations with the remaining **2%** coming from government grant funding and private donations and endowments.



Only **28.8%** of institutions participate in fundraising activities. Each May, the Ole Gilliam Mill Park in Sanford, Lee County, holds the Old Mill Crank Up. This fundraising event includes living history interpreters, a pottery kiln firing, bluegrass performers, and a chance to see the grist mill in action.



Money is essential to running a successful cultural heritage institution,



yet **82.9%** of institutions do not charge admission. Although

these fees are an obvious means of bringing in money, many institutions prefer to provide free access to the collections to broaden their accessibility to the public.

# NORTH CAROLINA'S CULTURAL RESOURCES A SURVEY AND REPORT 2010



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